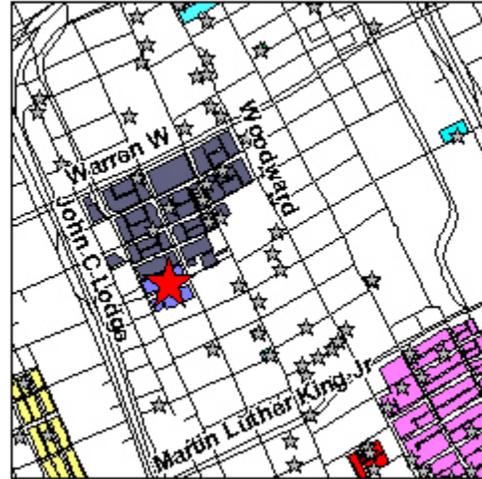


West Canfield Historic District

General boundaries: West Canfield between Second and Third.

Local	✓	1/1/70
State	✓	11/6/70
State Marker	✓	8/29/90
National	✓	5/27/71



700 block of W. Canfield streetscape.

Historic overview:

Mary Cass Canfield, daughter of Territorial Governor Lewis Cass, subdivided her apportionment of the Cass Farm, which includes the area known as the West Canfield Historic District, in 1871. Canfield Avenue is named in honor of her husband, Captain August Canfield. August Canfield was a graduate of West Point, and one of the principals in the construction of the ship canal at Sault Ste. Marie. As early as 1839 he had undertaken canal surveys at the Soo, and in 1853-54 he represented the State of Michigan as chief engineer during the early phases of construction. This area was the first historically designated district in Detroit.

In the early 1870s elegant brick houses in the Queen Anne style were constructed on spacious lots that had generous setbacks, and horse-drawn streetcars were soon available on the neighboring streets to ease transportation to the central business district. For several decades the neighborhood remained one of the foremost residential areas of Detroit. Due to the Depression, the area experienced steady decline from 1930-1945.

This downward trend began to reverse in the 1960s when new owners Mr. and Mrs. Groehn began renovating. Other new residents continued this effort and raised money to restore the street to its original design. The street was narrowed, curb lawns added, reproduction street lamps installed, granite blocks were used to pave the street (reused from a dismantled street), trees were planted, and grassy medians were added. This reclamation has taken over 30 years of extraordinary dedication and has gained the West Canfield Historic District national attention.

